Policy on Outfitting in Saskatchewan

A Status Report On Actions

August 1999

Saskatchewan
Environment
and Resource
Management

102-04977/

August 1999

To Saskatchewan Outfitters:

In 1997, Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) mapped out an ambitious agenda for action on policy and administrative needs for Saskatchewan's outfitting industry, in response to significant growth in the industry in the previous decade. That agenda, developed in consultation with the outfitting industry, was captured in SERM's *Policy on Outfitting in Saskatchewan, 1997*.

Since then, SERM has worked on many aspects of the outfitting policy agenda; this report describes progress to date. I believe you will find it both informative and interesting. The report's arrangement is based on the *Policy on Outfitting in Saskatchewan, 1997*, particularly the Implementation Plan section of that document.

When you read this report, you will see that although a number of issues have been resolved, a number of challenging issues remain. SERM, following consultation with the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association (SOA) and the Professional Outfitters and Tourism Association (POTA), has priorized its activities for policy development related to outfitting. The report identifies which of the remaining action items will see SERM activity in the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

As always, SERM's local conservation officers should be your initial point of contact for information about regulation and management of the outfitting industry.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Phillips
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As of September 1999, visit SERM's updated website at
www.serm.gov.sk.ca

Part 1: Organizational

1.1 - Outfitting Industry Representation

- Continue working closely with the SOA in accordance with the *Provincial-Saskatchewan Outfitters Association Partnership Agreement*

To Date:
A good working relationship continues between the Saskatchewan Outfitters Association (SOA) Executive and SERM. A major ongoing initiative is the development, in co-operation with Tourism Saskatchewan and the Department of Economic and Co-operative Development, of a proposal that considers the movement of outfitter licencing to an independent agency at arms-length from government. Other examples of the working relationship are found throughout this document.

1999-2000:
Continue to strengthen the working relationship, by regular meetings between SERM's Senior Management and SOA Executive, and locally between SERM regional staff and SOA Regions.

- Continue involving the SOA on Ministerial Advisory Committees as the outfitting industry representative

To Date:
SOA currently has representation on the Fisheries Advisory Committee, Forest Policy Advisory Committee, Parks Advisory Committee, and Wildlife Advisory Committee. SOA also participates in a number of regional land use planning forums, local provincial park advisory committees, and the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund steering committee.

1999-2000:
This level of participation is expected to continue. SERM sees the SOA as the industry representative on advisory committees and welcomes its participation in a wide variety of planning and public involvement processes.

- Expect the SOA to lead business aspects of the outfitting industry and represent industry interests on a joint department/industry forum to make recommendations to the Minister respecting amendment, suspension and revocation of outfitter's licences

To Date:
The joint department/industry forum has not been active, however the SOA has consistently been the industry leader regarding business aspects of the outfitting industry. The SOA is provided notification of licence revocations or suspensions as they occur. The major focus in the past year has been work on the independent outfitter licencing board concept, which is undergoing further consultation and program development by the industry-government working group.

1999-2000:
The SOA is expected to continue to lead in outfitter business aspects.

- Encourage industry organizations to work under a single umbrella organization

To Date:
SERM encourages an integrated working relationship between the two outfitter industry associations, the SOA and the Professional Outfitters and Tourism Association (POTA) to ensure the outfitter industry provides the best advice and information to the department and government.

1999-2000:
SERM will facilitate, as much as possible, a strong industry perspective from both industry associations.

1.2 - Outfitting Policy Consistency and Integration

- Establish an Economic Development Unit in SERM which will include responsibility for overall policy and program development for outfitting

To Date:
At present, provincial co-ordination for administration of the outfitting industry falls within the responsibility of Regional Services of Operations Division. The Programs Division, including Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Special Places, Sustainable Land Management, Forest Ecosystems, Environmental Protection and Economic Development Branches, have the lead responsibility in broad resource-based policy development affecting the outfitting industry.

1999-2000:
SERM is currently reviewing the most appropriate approach to meeting its full suite of outfitter policy, resource management and administrative responsibilities.

- Confirm regional offices as the department contact on regional issues and handling of outfitters' licences

To Date:
Each of SERM's EcoRegion headquarters has a regional outfitting co-ordinator whose duties include day-to-day regional outfitting issues.

1999-2000:
SERM EcoRegion staff will continue to be the first point of contact for outfitters on regional issues and licencing, with provincial co-ordination provided by Regional Services of Operations Division. SERM EcoRegion staff will attend SOA Regional meetings, and look to strengthening this relationship as the best approach to resolving regional outfitting issues.

- Confirm local conservation officers as the contact for local issues

To Date:
Local conservation officers are the contact for local issues of an enforcement nature, or for the acquisition of resource licences and permits as required.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to handle all local operational issues from field offices by conservation officers, fostering greater personal involvement with outfitters. These closer relationships will expedite administrative matters and assist in highlighting enforcement issues to allow for more rapid investigation.

Part 2: Resource Allocation

2.1 - Allocation of Resources for the Outfitting Industry

- Finalize an overall resource allocation policy which clarifies priority of access to fish and wildlife resources

To Date:
SERM's overall resource allocation policy is consistent with the fish allocation policy, and with the principles defined by the Wildlife Diversification Task Force. Fish and wildlife resource allocation is based on the following order of priority:

(1) conservation purposes;
(2) aboriginal obligations;
(3) non-commercial use by provincial residents; and
(4) commercial uses.

SERM is preparing a new senior policy for fish and wildlife allocation called the Fish and Wildlife Policy Framework. A draft of this policy is now available for review by interested groups.

1999-2000:
Allocation of fish and wildlife resources will continue to be based in the order of priority as identified, consistent with guidelines established by the Sparrow Supreme Court decision. Completion of the Fish and Wildlife Policy Framework is anticipated for fall 1999.

- Develop the specifics of a northern moose allocation policy

To Date:
An allocation process for non-resident guided moose licences in Wildlife Management Zones (WMZ) 60 to 62, and 69 to 76 has been in place for a number of years. Under the current licence allocation process, first right of use for non-resident guided moose allocations is given to outfitters operating in the zone in which the allocation is valid. The first right of use opportunity expires after August 1st of the calender year in WMZ 60 and 61 and May 1st of the calender year for the remaining zones in which guided moose hunting is offered. All non-resident guided moose allocations that are not claimed after the August 1st and May 1st expiry dates are made available, on a first-come basis to any licenced moose outfitter.

SERM has received complaints from the industry that the expiry dates for the unused guided moose allocations are too late in the year to allow adequate marketing of these allocations.

1999-2000:
A new provincial moose harvest strategy is being developed. SERM will involve key interest groups, including the outfitting industry, in the development process. It is anticipated a draft will be available for review and discussion by late winter 1999-2000. The current non-resident guided moose allocation system will be reviewed as part of the provincial strategy development process.

- Introduce policy and guidelines for transfer of outfitting privileges and authorization of new or additional outfitting services

To Date:
Guidelines were developed and introduced to the outfitting industry in November 1996.

1999-2000:
SERM is updating these guidelines to ensure their compatibility with *The Outfitter and Guide Regulations, 1996.* The updated guidelines will be distributed to all licenced outfitters, following their completion, anticipated in summer 1999.

- Develop a policy and guidelines for de-allocation in event of population decreases or increased demand by other users

To Date:
An official policy dealing with de-allocation has not been developed. Allocation of resource use opportunities has generally followed guidelines established by the Sparrow decision of the Supreme Court that directed conservation of the resource is highest priority followed by subsistence use for Aboriginal people, resident use and finally commercial use including outfitting activities.

1999-2000:
Government will continue to apply these guidelines in allocating resource use opportunities. Generally, with the exception of making allocation adjustments for resource conservation purposes, outfitters will be given a one-year notice of changes to their resource allocation. When allocation adjustments are made for resource conservation purposes, including quota adjustments due to severe winter mortality, advance notification may not be possible.

2.2 - Allocation Fees From Outfitting

- Develop separate systems for outfitter's licence fees and for resource allocation fees

To Date:
Presently, there are two separate systems in place. Outfitter's licence fees include endorsement fees and Outcamp/day use lake fees. Resource allocation fees are established for Big Game only, and are purchased by the outfitter as required.

1999-2000:
Further consideration of resource allocation fees for fish and game birds may be considered as part of the larger family of licencing issues that include development of the proposed outfitter licencing board.

- Develop a fee system for fish outfitting which reflects the potential harvest of the resource

To Date:
A fee system for fish outfitters has not been explored at this time.

1999-2000:
SERM has been working with the outfitting industry on development of an alternative resource allocation policy to replace the current bed capacity policy. Once a new allocation system is developed, consideration of a fee system for fish outfitters can begin.

- Establish a minimum and maximum number of white-tailed deer allocation licenses per township of operating area in the Provincial Forest

To Date:
November 1996 guidelines established a maximum of 8 white-tailed deer allocations per township.

1999-2000
SERM will review resource allocation numbers upon sale of an outfitting business, or on request from the outfitter. Allocations will consider various factors including ecology of the area, resident hunter interest, and other values of the forest.

- Eliminate outfitter's licence fees for day-use lakes and outcamps

To Date:
This issue refers in part to a larger process involving the development of an equitable resource allocation fee system. A resource allocation fee structure has not been designed for game birds or fish at this time.

1999-2000:
Once an alternative resource allocation policy to replace the current bed capacity policy is developed, discussion can begin on a fee system for fish outfitters.

- Introduce a "seasonal hunter allocation" fee for the game bird sector.

To Date:
There has been no discussion on development of a seasonal hunter allocation fee for the game bird sector.

1999-2000:
This issue is similar to the fish allocation fee system, and may be considered in future, based on a co-operative approach with both SERM and the outfitting industry involved.

Part 3: Resource Management

3.1 - Big Game Outfitting in Saskatchewan's Farmland

- Seek legal opinion from Saskatchewan Justice regarding a regulatory requirement prohibiting big game outfitters from operating on posted land in the northern farmland

- Develop guidelines for outfitted non-resident big game hunting in those farmland WMZs where permitted in 1996; guidelines are intended to include a prohibition of outfitted hunting for big game on posted lands

- Transfer operating areas associated with sale of an outfitting business but not allow any increase of existing area or number of outfitters currently operating in the northern farmland.

To Date:
These refer directly to outfitting operations where 1) an outfitter has both provincial forest and transition zone area (farmland fringe) within their operating area and/or 2) an outfitter operates solely on transition area lands. The three action items were intended to direct development of policy and guidelines that would:

- clarify government's position on the future of non-resident big game outfitting in the transition zone area.

- provide clarity as to how government would authorize business transactions involving the sale of outfitting services and the associated disposition of current and future outfitting licences involving forest and transition zone land, and
- reduce land access conflict between outfitters - landowners - resident hunters that stemmed from outfitting operations on posted farmland.

Saskatchewan Justice has advised that an outfitter's licence cannot be sold or transferred. A new outfitter's licence can be issued to cover a vacant outfitting area as a result of an outfitter wishing to sell their outfitting services (buildings, equipment) or inactivity by an outfitter. Outfitting services do not include the outfitting licence or big game allocations.

The following policy positions have been developed to administer business transactions involving outfitting operations on forest and transition zone lands.

A) Transactions involving only forest land

- outfitters may sell their outfitting business,
- a prospective outfitter who is interested in purchasing a business from an existing outfitter must submit an outfitter's licence application, and
- SERM will take into consideration a variety of factors in determining if a new outfitter's licence will be issued for the assigned operating area and the appropriate big game resource allocation for the new licence (in most instances the issuance of a new outfitter's licence would occur).

B) Transactions involving both forest and transition land

- outfitters may sell their outfitting business,
- SERM will not issue a new outfitter's licence for non-resident white-tailed deer outfitting for the portion of the outfitting area that includes transition zone land,
- consideration will be given, however, to the issuance of a new outfitter's licence and the appropriate big game resource allocation for the new licence for non-resident white-tailed deer outfitting in the existing portion of the outfitting area that is provincial forest land only and for non-resident bear outfitting for both provincial forest and transition land, and
- a prospective outfitter who is interested in purchasing an existing outfitter business operating in areas identified in the preceding point must submit an application to SERM.

C) Transactions involving only transition zone land

- outfitters who only outfit for non-resident bear in the transition zone may sell their outfitting business,
- a prospective outfitter who is interested in purchasing an existing outfitting business must submit an application to SERM,
- consideration will be given to the issuance of a new outfitter's licence and the appropriate bear allocation quota for the new licence,

- SERM will not issue a new outfitter's licence for non-resident white-tailed deer outfitting for the transition zone land, and
- outfitters should be aware, however, that a policy development process involving discussions among SERM, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and the SOA is underway which, by winter 1999-2000, is expected to result in a new policy regarding the future of non-resident white-tailed deer outfitting in the transition zone land including outfitting on leased agricultural Crown land.

1999-2000:
A more detailed explanation of the above guidelines is being prepared and is expected to be available to the industry by summer 1999.

SERM is awaiting advice from Saskatchewan Justice which will provide direction for consideration as to possible approaches to the implications of restricting outfitting operations on privately controlled land which is posted against hunting.

A government position pertaining to outfitting operations on privately controlled land which is posted against hunting will be developed by winter 1999-2000.

- Examine methods for providing sufficient economic or other incentive to landowners or lessees to retain wildlife habitat

To Date:
The following initiatives are in place to promote wildlife habitat retention on privately controlled land:

- waterfowl and big game damage programs to offer compensation to landowners incurring damage to their farm crops,
- farmers can receive financial tax benefits through the conservation easement program which offers farmers the opportunity to preserve the conservation values of the land while maintaining use of the land, and
- a number of habitat retention and enhancement programs are offered through the Saskatchewan Wetlands Conservation Corporation, Ducks Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and others.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to work with farmers and conservation organizations to explore options to secure and enhance wildlife habitat in Saskatchewan. Significant staff and financial resources will be directed toward implementation of the Representative Areas Network (RAN) program, one of whose objectives is native habitat retention.

- Continue to disallow outfitting in "island forests" and provincial parks where outfitted hunting is not now permitted

To Date:
This direction has been followed; outfitting is not allowed in "island forests" or in provincial parks in which outfitted hunting was not permitted at the time of policy implementation.

1999-2000:
SERM does not intend to alter this position.

3.2 - Resident/Non-Resident Big Game Hunter Conflict

- Enforce regulations making it an offence to restrict access to vacant public lands and fish and wildlife resources.

To Date:
SERM Conservation Officers actively investigate any reported violations of this nature.

1999-2000:
SERM will encourage hunters and outfitters to continue to report incidents of restricted access so that appropriate investigation can be undertaken.

- Disallow further development of permanent tree stands in the Provincial Forest by April 1, 1997.

- Examine ways of gradually removing all existing permanent tree stands from the Provincial Forest

To Date:
Outfitter's licences are issued with a condition preventing the construction of new permanent tree stands in the provincial forest.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue this approach to construction of new permanent tree stands, but anticipates concern about permanent stands will lessen as outfitters appear to be moving to more convenient portable stands.

- Review provincial regulations (e.g. seasons, baiting, bag limits) via the Wildlife Advisory Committee for possible reduction of resident/outfitted hunter conflict

To Date:
This is an ongoing process with both SERM and the SOA, as part of the broader Wildlife Advisory Committee process, to reduce hunter/outfitter conflict wherever possible.

A number of allocation/hunting related actions have been pursued that focus on resident hunter/outfitter/landowner conflict reduction including:

- development of a five-year hunting season strategy where hunting season dates are fixed for a five-year period and, as much as possible, promote early opening dates and hunting opportunity for resident hunters;
- elimination of the non-resident 2nd either-sex white-tailed deer licence in forest and forest fringe zones;
- finalization of assigned operating areas for outfitters; and

- a gradual shift by the outfitting industry away from use of permanent tree stands to use of temporary/portable stands.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to work with the Wildlife Advisory Committee to reduce conflict among resident hunters/outfitters/farmers.

- Examine options for increased resident hunter access to private and leased lands

To Date:
Over the years there has been an upward trend in the amount of land, both private and leased, that is not accessible to either resident or outfitted hunters. There are some examples where only non-residents of Canada have hunting privileges on leased crown lands. Government finds this an unacceptable situation.

1999-2000:
SERM believes that residents of this province must have equal hunting privileges to non-residents of Canada. In meetings with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and the outfitting industry about future directions for the outfitting industry, SERM has keyed on the need to maintain, at a minimum, current levels of access.

3.3 - Assigned Operating Areas for Big Game Outfitters in the Provincial Forest

- Eliminate big game outfitter overlap in WMZs 56-70 by March 31, 1997

To Date:
Virtually complete with only a small number of concerns yet to be resolved.

1999-2000:
SERM will work with the affected outfitters to complete the overlap elimination initiative.

- Introduce guidelines for sale of outfitting services and associated transfer of outfitting privileges in WMZs 56-70 for 1997

To Date:
Guidelines were introduced in November 1996.

1999-2000:
SERM will update these guidelines to ensure their compatibility with *The Outfitter and Guide Regulations, 1996,* but significant departure from the existing guidelines is not anticipated. A target date of summer 1999 has been established. The update will clarify that an outfitting business can be sold, and outline the procedure for consideration by the Minister of SERM for approval and issuing a new outfitter's licence and resource allocations to the prospective purchaser. Additional information is included in 3.1 - Big Game Outfitting in Saskatchewan's Farmland.

3.4 - Mandatory Outfitting of Non-Resident Game Bird Hunters

- Review the Alberta experience if mandatory guiding of non-resident game bird hunters is implemented in that province

To Date:
No action; mandatory guiding of non-resident game bird hunters has not been implemented in Alberta.

1999-2000:
SERM will monitor outfitting policies of neighbouring provinces. Alberta is presently implementing a process that will require any commercial operator in the migratory bird hunting sector to obtain an outfitter/guide permit, and a requirement for any hunter who pays for services in this sector to obtain those services from a properly licenced outfitter or guide.

3.5 - Operating Areas and Numbers of Southern Game Bird Outfitters

- Establish a maximum of 5 Wildlife Management Zones in a contiguous block of operating area for game bird outfitting, and identify areas closed to further game bird outfitting

To Date:
Completed and described in the November 1996 guidelines.

1999-2000:
This information will also be included in the revised guidelines.

- Examine the upland "release and harvest" game farm concept and present findings to the Wildlife Advisory Committee for its recommendation

To Date:
Regulatory amendments were made in 1997 enabling the operation of commercial shoot farms for pen-raised pheasants. As of May 1999, a total of 12 commercial pheasant shoot farms are licenced and in operation in agricultural Saskatchewan.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to licence commercial shoot farms for pen-raised pheasants. Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food is the lead agency in game farm policy development.

3.6 - Fish Resource Allocation for Outfitting

- Develop policy and guidelines to convert the present fish resource allocation system to a "seasonal angler capacity"

To Date:
SERM presented a draft "seasonal angler capacity" policy to the December 1997 SOA Convention where it received mixed reviews. Since then, further SERM - SOA discussions resulted in a working group consisting of the SOA Fisheries Committee and three SERM staff tasked with developing a better fish resource allocation system that is more sensitive to resource management needs. Working group meetings in February and May 1999 demonstrated further work is required in clarifying basic data collection and reporting requirements, and ensuring client list confidentiality for outfitters.

1999-2000:
Continued effort is warranted in this initiative, and SERM and the SOA have agreed that a facilitator should be used to assist the working group in development of a new fish resource allocation policy, now targetted for implementation in the 2000 outfitting season.

- Design a system for allocation and associated fees for waters not covered by the "seasonal angler capacity" policy

To Date:
A system for allocation and fees for waters not covered by the seasonal angler capacity policy has not been explored at this time.

1999-2000:
As described above, SERM has been working with the outfitting industry on development of an alternative resource allocation policy to replace the current bed capacity policy. As this new allocation system is developed, discussion will begin on those waters not covered by the current policy.

The additional work in the coming months concerning establishment of an independent outfitter licencing board may have a bearing on the direction of these discussions.

3.7 - Outfitting in Provincial Parks

- Work with the outfitting industry and Parks Advisory Committee towards operating guidelines for outfitting on provincial park lands

To Date:
SERM has an internal working group that will be developing policies on outfitting, hunting, trapping, angling, baiting, tree stands and trail use on provincial park lands. In March 1999, SERM presented a discussion paper on these items to SOA Executive members and subsequently to the Parks Advisory Committee.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to keep the Parks Advisory Committee and SOA informed and request their input in the process of developing these policies, which are anticipated to be completed in 1999-2000.

- Determine if expansion opportunities exist for outfitted hunting and fishing on provincial park lands

To Date:
The discussion paper presented in March 1999 to SOA Executive members and the Parks Advisory Committee indicated:

- there would be no new outfitted hunting on park land,
- no expansion of existing areas,
- sale of an existing outfitting business is allowed,
- new policy will not prevent an application for an existing outfitting area on park land, and
- the question of expansion of outfitted angling requires further consideration.

1999-2000:
The Parks Advisory Committee and the SOA will be kept informed and their input will be requested in this regard.

- Integrate licensing programs for outfitters in provincial parks where both *The Outfitter and Guide Regulations* and *The Parks Act* apply

To Date:
Licencing of outfitters in provincial parks remains under the authority of *The Outfitter and Guide Regulations, 1996.* In a provincial park an outfitter with a building(s) requires a lease and outfitter's licence with a resource allocation. There are differences in the lease fees.

1999-2000:
Guidelines for operating in provincial parks will be refined in the process described above and may be subject to additional terms of *The Parks Act*. Provincial park lands are special places that require a greater degree of protection, consideration and control.

3.8 - Pressures on Resources from Illegal Outfitting

- Undertake education and enforcement targeting illegal outfitting

To Date:
SERM conservation officers have had some successful investigations involving illegal big game and game bird outfitting. The convictions that resulted were a culmination of lengthy undercover investigations using information gathered from resident hunters, outfitters, and the general public. The outfitting industry continues to express concern regarding the expansion of illegal outfitting.

1999-2000:
SERM requests that all incidents of illegal outfitting are reported in a timely manner so conservation officers can take appropriate action. Those incidents involving resource abuses will be a higher priority for action than simpler administrative or licencing violations.

- Consider restrictions on Canadian resident big game hunting to reduce hunting pressure and assist in eliminating illegal outfitting

To Date:
Canadian resident white-tailed deer season dates have been delayed and shortened across most of the province to reduce hunter and landowner conflict. Special enforcement operations have been targeted, with good success, at illegal outfitting activities involving Canadian resident hunters. 1997 and 1998 Canadian resident white-tailed deer hunters were surveyed to get a better understanding of their hunt activity and hunter success.

1999-2000:
Following assessment of the two years of data, SERM will determine if further changes to Canadian resident deer hunting seasons are warranted.

- Examine methods (e.g. 6 day/seasonal licence)for identifying and curbing prolonged illegal game bird outfitting

To Date:
Special enforcement operations have been targeted, with some success, at illegal game bird outfitting activities. SERM, SOA and POTA have had discussions about development of a limited duration licence for game bird hunters as a potential option to reduce the level of illegal outfitting occurring in the province. SERM presented the concept of limited duration licencing to the Wildlife Advisory Committee in February 1999, and received their endorsement to return with a more refined proposal.

1999-2000:
SERM will review a number of "limited duration licence options", and provide them for consideration by the Wildlife Advisory Committee later in 1999-2000. The earliest that new licence options could be implemented would be the 2001 hunting season.

- Examine possibilities for more stringent controls and penalties associated with illegal outfitting or excessive resource use through Crown recreation leases

To Date:
No action on more stringent control or penalty considerations; SERM continues to investigate reported incidents of illegal outfitting. Two excellent investigations in the Turtle Lake and Strasbourg areas in 1998 concluded with significant fines of $10,000 and vehicle forfeiture, and more than $9,000, respectively.

1999-2000:
SERM conservation officers encourage outfitters to report all substantiated cases of illegal outfitting. SERM will continue to investigate complaints regarding illegal outfitting and illegal outfitting practices, as officers are made aware of them and as budgets and manpower allow. Complaints which outline serious resource impacting activities will be given priority over violations with less impact.

SERM is working with Environment Canada and US Fish and Wildlife Service to streamline the procedure used to conduct joint investigations with these organizations.

3.9 - Commercial Ecotourism

- Monitor commercial ecotour use of public lands and resources and determine corrective measures in areas of excessive impact
- Authorize ecotourism activities in provincial parks through business licences pursuant to *The Parks Act*
- Participate in the establishment of provincial ecotour policy and council

To Date:
SERM has been concerned with the developments of the ecotourism industry and its effect on both the ecosystem and the existing resource users. SERM believes that future developments in ecotourism have to consider existing resource uses and resource users so as to prevent conflicts.

SERM presently has a committee in place to work on the role and involvement of SERM in ecotourism, including development of appropriate policies, guidelines and legislation (if necessary) and how ecotourism proposals will be handled on Crown land and provincial park land.

SERM, SOA, a number of other agencies and ecotour business operators are all represented on the Tourism Saskatchewan President's Ecotourism Committee. Tourism Saskatchewan is providing a leadership role in the formulation of ecotourism policy and accreditation for ecotourism in Saskatchewan.

1999-2000:
SERM will seek a balance between staff effort in ecotourism administration and the resource management implications of ecotourism.

Ecotourism activities in Provincial Parks will be authorized through business licences or commercial leases pursuant to *The Parks Act*, however, some modifications may be required to existing guidelines to accommodate ecotourism activities.

Part 4: Aboriginal Participation

4.1 - Outfitting on Indian Reserves

- Provide advice and technical assistance to First Nations bands involved in on-reserve outfitting

To Date:
There have been discussions between SERM, at the district and regional levels, and individual First Nations bands regarding outfitting on reserves and lands acquired in the TLE process. SERM, when requested, has provided assistance to First Nations bands in developing necessary band bylaws for the operation of their outfitting business.

First Nations have approached the SOA for advice, and are part of the committee looking at developing standards for the industry.

1999-2000:
SERM will provide assistance whenever requested by First Nations bands or First Nations individuals regarding on-reserve outfitting. SERM considers it in the best interest of tourism, and the established outfitting industry, to ensure First Nation outfitting operations conduct business in a professional manner.

- Encourage First Nations bands to adopt wildlife management regulations similar to those implemented by the province

To Date:
In general, most First Nations have similar bylaws that were developed from a model bylaw developed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The bylaws are similar to provincial laws except for some of the clothing requirements and season dates. All the bylaws contain safety and fair chase rules similar to provincial regulations.

Discussions have been held with some First Nations that are interested in developing wildlife management plans. Some First Nations run effective management programs while others have had some management difficulties as they start up in the outfitting industry.

1999-2000:
SERM will work with any First Nations that request assistance or information concerning wildlife management techniques or programs. SERM will encourage First Nation participation in management programs through meetings with the various Bands and at the provincial level with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN).

- In consultation with individual First Nations bands, develop a system for the export of game harvested on reserves

To Date:
Completed; hunting licences issued by the First Nations involved in outfitting on their reserve are used as export permits for non-resident hunters, in the same fashion as a provincial hunting licence.

1999-2000:
Consistency and accountability issues need to be resolved by the First Nations involved, so as to reduce administrative difficulties at customs offices. SERM aboriginal liaison staff are working with FSIN resource management staff and interested First Nations to develop a licencing system with the goal of having the system adopted by First Nations for the fall of 1999.

4.2 - Outfitting by First Nations on Land Purchased Under the Saskatchewan Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement

- Provide interim authorization (outfitter's licence) allowing outfitting services on TLE lands

To Date:
Process developed in which SERM issues a First Nation outfitting service an interim provincial outfitter's licence for operation on TLE lands awaiting official reserve status. While operating with this interim provincial outfitter's licence, First Nation outfitters are subject to the same rules as provincially licenced outfitters.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to use this approach.

4.3 - Northern Resident Involvement in Outfitting

- Introduce policy and guidelines which reserve unallocated fish and wildlife resources as economic opportunities for residents of and existing outfitting services in the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District

To Date:
SERM November 1996 guidelines provide this policy direction, which is consistent with the commitment by Government and Northern Leaders to co-operatively develop economic opportunities for northern Saskatchewan residents, as recently reflected in the *Northern Strategy For Saskatchewan*.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to reflect this commitment in the updated version of the guidelines.

- Enlist services of co-management boards to assist in implementing policy allocation of fish and wildlife resources in the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District

To Date:
This is an ongoing process where there are functioning co-management boards. Throughout the north, there are a number of examples where co-management boards are very much involved in the local decision making process, including:

- Reindeer Lake and Wollaston Lake designated as CR1,
- July 15th starting date for commercial fishing on Reindeer Lake,
- restriction on commercial fishing near Southend on Reindeer Lake to allow for senior and domestic fishing,
- implementation of an angler limit of 4 lake trout per season and introduction of a species licence on Lac La Ronge; the co-management board is involved in decisions regarding water depth control for Lac La Ronge, and
- Deschambault board made recommendations and were instrumental in having closures established on rivers entering the south end of Deschambault Lake.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to use this approach, believing that the best resource management decisions are made using input from interested stakeholders.

- In co-operation with the Departments of Northern Affairs and Economic Development, examine new opportunities associated with outfitting for northern residents

To Date:
The Office of Northern Affairs has, in conjunction with Northern leaders, led the development of an enabling framework through the *Northern Strategy For Saskatchewan* which emphasizes an effort to create jobs and business opportunities for northern people. Any opportunities for commercial endeavours associated with resources will provide preference to northern people.

1999-2000:
SERM will continue to support the Office of Northern Affairs and the effort to create business opportunities in all sectors in the north, including outfitting.

Part 5: Business

5.1 - Service Standards in the Outfitting Industry

- Consult with Saskatchewan Justice on the legal basis for adopting an industry-driven accreditation system for outfitter licensing
- Assist in the development of industry service standards and determine level of involvement by other government departments
- Implement accreditation criteria for outfitter's licence applications and renewals
- Examine the possibility of transferring administrative responsibility for outfitter licensing to the industry

To date:
A working group of SERM, Tourism Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development and the SOA is developing a proposal for an independent outfitter licencing board for consideration by government.

1999-2000:
Additional consultation and development of program details is currently underway to further refine the concept for government consideration. This activity continues to be a major initiative for SERM and the outfitting industry in the coming year.